



Blue Ridge CUSD#18  
411 N. John Street, Farmer City, IL 61842  
Phone: 309 928-9141  
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May 24, 2024

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to express my support for taking the necessary steps to create a 708 Board in Piatt County. As the superintendent of Blue Ridge CUSD#18, which is partly situated in Piatt County, I believe that these actions will help provide a healthy framework for those seeking services related to mental health, substance use treatment, and for developmental supportive services, especially for those in our marginalized community. Piatt County has always be known as a place where community need is best met with community resources and I believe that passing a 708 Board would be just another positive step in this tradition.

The need for mental health services continues to be more in the public eye and the demand for treatment continues to rise. Nationally 1 in 6 children have a diagnosed mental, behavioral, or developmental disorder. 16.5% of people over the age of 12 have met criteria for a substance use disorder (SUD) in the past year. Our school community has realized significant increases in behavioral and mental health concerns. To that end, for the upcoming school year, we are doubling our social work services that we purchase through Tri-County Special Education Association in an attempt to increase our support of the behavioral and mental health challenges our students are experiencing on a daily basis. The school, however, cannot be the only provider of services for our students. We desperately need the community support system to be active and accessible.

For over 50 years, The Piatt County Mental Health Center has been a beacon of support for those in need of mental health and developmental disability support. One of the bigger challenges to The Piatt County Mental Health Center has been how to navigate rising operational costs with a stagnant and insufficient state-reimbursement rate. If these expenses continue to rise at current rates and there is not an identified supplemental revenue stream relatively soon, a reduction of services will be the only logical conclusion. This will have a significantly negative impact on Blue Ridge CUSD#18 students, who qualify as under-resourced individuals.

Please join me in this proactive step to ensure our community has a strong network of support for those seeking services by supporting the establishment of a 708 Board on November 5th . We can send a clear message that the needs of Piatt County residents will be met by Piatt County neighbors. Please vote yes for 708.

Respectfully,

Dr. Hillary Stanifer

Dr. Hillary Stanifer, Superintendent

Mr. Brian Easter, BRHS Principal    Mrs. Mary Diener, BRHS Interim Assistant Principal  
Mr. Burton Huddleston, BRIJHS Principal    Mrs. Shawna Kollross, BRIJHS Student Dean  
Mr. Ryan Peyton, Ruth M. Schneider Elementary Principal

